

## **Behavior FAQ: Cats That Meow or Cry Too Much**

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Obviously, meowing and making other sounds are normal cat behaviors. Whether or not you believe it is excessive depends in part on your expectations and tolerance level. **Excessive vocalizations can signify undiagnosed health problems, so take your cat to a veterinarian for a checkup, especially if the vocalizations are new behaviors.**

Excessive vocalizations can have several other different causes. Cats can learn to meow to get things they want. If meowing leads you to put food down, pet your cat or play with him, then your cat knows that meowing works. Sometimes this can get out of hand to the point that your cat meows almost constantly in order to get you to do something. Not rewarding the behavior or teaching your cat to do other things to get what he wants can be helpful.

Cats can also meow when they are anxious or fearful of something or when they are not feeling well. For this reason, it's always a good idea to have your cat checked by your veterinarian, especially if she is older. Anxiety and fears can usually be treated with behavior modification techniques or changes to your cat's environment.

Meowing or vocalizing at night is a fairly common problem in older cats. Behaviorists don't know for sure why older cats do this. Often we can recommend changes in your cat's environment to manage the behavior. Your veterinarian may also prescribe medication that may be helpful.

### **FIND A BEHAVIOR CONSULTANT TO HELP**

Many problems are easily corrected through modification training, particularly if problems are addressed early. Find an animal behavior consultant in your area through one of the following Web sites: [American College of Veterinary Behaviorists](http://www.acvb.org), [International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants](http://www.iaabc.org) or [Animal Behavior Society](http://www.abn.org). Learn more by reading "Guidelines for Choosing a Trainer or Behavior Consultant."